

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MAY 16, 2012

PRESENT: Ethel Mantzaris (Youth Services), **Chair;** Victoria Nimirowski (WAIM), Vice Chair; Jane Blanshard (Disabilities), secretary; Sara Anderson (Advocates for Children); Dexter Eddy (Housing Authority); Kevin Grunwald (ex officio); Lorraine Kenowski, at large; Bev Korba (Senior Center); Joan Terry (Commission on Aging).
ABSENT: Ron Baker (First Baptist Church), at large

Meeting called to order at 2:00 p.m.
Minutes, corrected, approved.

For next meeting: Find out who is on town transportation committee and make plans to meet with them and other agencies with concerns in this area. Numbers of people being referred for clinical services, why and to where?

Kevin distributed a human services update. Kevin reported that Joe Courtney had done a good job of explaining what is happening about Medicare and Medicaid. There is only one doctor in Mansfield currently accepting new Medicare patients. Courtney praised community health clinics. A good crowd attended.

Sara reported on a very well-attended meeting about the plans for a community playground; many children contributed ideas. It is an exciting way for the community to work together, including seniors, college students, etc., and not just parents of young children.

Kevin also distributed a quarterly report. This report follows a format used by all departments for the first time. It includes issues and challenges in each program area. It provides a way of tracking improvement on identified goals. Ethel asked him to put the number of contacts first in future reports.

Ethel pointed out that one of the challenges of the YSB is staffing. Kevin said that was not included because it is not a “documented challenge.”

We looked at the budget.

Jane was listed on the agenda as reporting on “Public Transportation Collaborative.” She did not know what this involved. Kevin said it was a proposal made by Gloria Bent of the Disabilities Advisory Committee that groups with transportation needs get together. What to do before next month? Jane said she would try to find out who is on the transportation committee. Ethel asked why we were concerned about this issue. Kevin said we need to decide if this is our responsibility.

Kevin admitted that the transportation committee meets very seldom. He suggested that we get the commission on aging, the disabilities committee, and the children’s collaborative all go to the advisory committee, giving them cause to meet. We could propose a plan for enhanced public transportation. Jane said the committee ought to be doing this. She asked what they actually do, and Kevin

admitted that he couldn't answer it. Ethel pointed out that there is a committee and we don't need to take over their function.

Kevin: we seem to have a consensus that we can't be all things to all people, so what are the critical priorities. Are we duplicating services? Are we neglecting necessary actions? Human Services is pretty far-ranging, from preschool to seniors and in-between. He wants us to identify things someone else could be doing better and things we should do. Joan asked if he was asking us to add to the list of things Kevin's staff already does.

Ethel asked if there is any counseling offered in adult services. Kevin said it's because we have no licensed clinician. Why not? Kevin said it was not a priority at the senior center. Victoria said we should be referring those cases out to Natchaug or someplace. (Lorraine) Would it make sense to have more shared referrals? It would be helpful to build more relationships with local sources of clinical help. Is it possible to get numbers of people being referred out of town? We need specific information about what is happening now before we make suggestions.

Ethel pointed out that licensed people have the expertise to decide where to refer people. Youth services has always had licensed people on staff. Does every department which conducts intakes have the expertise to know where to refer people? Kevin says if we look at the Mission Statement it doesn't say anything about providing clinical psychological services. We just say we meet basic human needs. There was a long discussion of this issue.

High school age kids are not currently being served by the town, on the theory that E. O. Smith covers that. We might look into this. It might be a goal for the future to cover K-12.

Kevin: If we are to think of this department as more of clinical than a traditional social services department, we must reflect this in the mission.

People do not know about the volunteer program. Kevin reported that WRTD is looking into partnering with Mansfield to make scheduled stops in some of the multiple housing projects. Back to what the transportation does and who it reports to. Kevin says they are an advisory committee to the town council. They come together around specific issues. Jane offered to call someone to find out who is on it.. She was advised to call the town clerk. Kevin said we used to get lists of committee members and reports of accomplishments. They seem to have had no accomplishments during the past year. If these groups come to them, they may take more notice and pull themselves together.

Kevin wants us to think about whether to meet during the summer. This will be on the agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. Next meeting: **June 20, 2012, at 2 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Blanshard